first programs focusing on Alzheimers-Respite Care, Adult Day Health care and the Multipurpose Senior Services Programs. He founded the Senior Legislature and passed legislation to combat elder abuse. In the 20 years that Senator Mello has served in the legislature, he has authored more than 120 bills on aging and long-term care that have become law of the land in California.

Senator Mello's commitment to our senior citizens, and indeed to all citizens, was particularly impressive when their need was greatest, after the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989. Senator Mello's work was key in maintaining vital lines of communication and in ensuring that our area received millions of dollars to aid in the region's rebuilding. I am certain that had it not been for Senator Mello's initiative and hard work our area's recovery would have been far less easy. Helping the area recuperate from the earthquake was just one of many highlights in his distinguished legislative career.

For many years to come, tangible evidence of Senator Mello's labors will be obvious to all California residents, especially his interest in education and the arts. During his tenure as chairman of the Fort Ord Task Force, Senator Mello helped establish the California State University at Monterey Bay, the University of California, Santa Cruz research center at Fort Ord and authored the legislation creating the Fort Ord Reuse Authority. Senator Mello also acquired essential funding for Santa Cruz County libraries preventing their closure and, in perhaps the greatest tribute to his work, was honored in 1994 with the naming of the Henry J. Mello Center for Performing Arts in Watsonville. One could literally fill books with Senator Mello's many other wonderful accomplishments.

As he retires this year because of State term-limits, one thing is positively certain: Senator Mello will be sorely missed. For my part, I will miss working with a member of the Democratic team who has so successfully governed the Central Coast for more than a generation. As for the people of his district, they will no doubt miss something much more profound. In the Senator, they will miss a man who has lived his life to serve, who has led with levels of compassion and commitment not normally found in our public servants these days. But then again, Senator Mello has been no ordinary public servant.

TRIBUTE TO AMATO L. BERARDI

HON. ROBERT A. BORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 1996

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of my close personal friend Amato L. Berardi, who will have the title ''Cavaliere dell'Ordine al merito della Republica Italiana'' bestowed upon him on March 17, 1996.

Amato L. Berardi was born on October 14, 1958 in Longano, a province of Isbernia, Italy. His parents, Carmine Berardi and Carmela Ditri, were married in Italy where they had four sons. In 1970 they emigrated to the United States.

Upon arriving in Philadelphia, Amato attended Mater Dolorosa grade school, followed by North East Catholic High School. In 1975, while still in high school, he and his brothers owned and operated a restaurant in Philadelphia. Amato graduated from high school in 1978, and then went on to attend Philadelphia College of Textiles and Business for 2 years. During Amato's 2-year tenure, he majored in business management.

On January 4, 1983, Amato joined New York Life where he became the No. 1 agent in his class in 1983. He became the Executive Council agent in 1986, achieved Presidents Council status in 1987, and Chairman's Council in 1993. Mr. Berardi gained membership in the Million Dollar Round Table, and has received the National Quality and National Sales Achievement awards.

Amato has also been recognized for his service to his community. He has received the Italian-American Knights Legion's Knight of Goodness Award, and has been honored with a Humanitarian Citation from the City Council of Philadelphia and the State Senate of Pennsylvania. Amato is also president of the National Italian American Political Action Committee and the Federation of Italian American Businesses. He is also actively involved in numerous social organizations, including the Overbrook Italo-American Democratic Club, the Sons of Italy, the Columbus Association of America, and the American Heart Association.

Today, Amato resides in Huntington Valley with his wife of 13 years, Maddalena Caranci, and their two children Carmelina and Carmine.

Mr. Speaker, I join Amato Berardi's family and friends in congratulating him for a lifetime of hard work and devotion to the Italian-American community and congregation.

TRIBUTE TO MELVIN EGGERT

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 1996

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my sympathy to the family and many friends of Melvin Eggert, the former mayor of Countryside, IL, a community in my district.

Mr. Eggert was a true pioneer in the community, which was incorporated in 1959. From 1960 to 1963, he served on the city council and then was Countryside's mayor from 1963 to 1967. He helped guide the city through its infancy, providing the foundation for its growth into one of the most prosperous suburbs in the Chicago area. He was also a successful restaurant owner in the area.

Mr. Speaker, I extend my condolences to Mr. Eggert's wife, Martha, and his entire family and his many friends on his passing.

THE PATIENT RIGHT TO KNOW ACT OF 1996

HON. GREG GANSKE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 1996

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with my colleague from Massachusetts, [Mr. MARKEY] and numerous original cosponsors in introducing legislation to ensure that doctors remain free to provide critical health care information to patients.

There is nothing more central to the doctor-patient relationship than trust. Patients and their families rely on doctors to fully inform them about the course of a disease and the various ways it can be treated. They deserve to know the risks and benefits, the costs, and the chances of success of the treatments that will be inflicted on their own bodies or their loved ones. And they don't want information withheld because of an insurance company restriction.

Unfortunately, that essential doctor-patient trust is being undermined by some health plans that attempt to limit the content of discussions between patients and providers. Physicians are increasingly being offered contracts by insurance companies that contain restrictive clauses preventing the physician from using sound medical judgment and undermine the essential notion of informed consent.

Sometimes, these contracts explicitly seek to limit the information a doctor can provide to a patient, preventing doctors from discussing proposed treatments until the plan has agreed to pay for it. How can we expect patients to make informed decisions about their own health if doctors can only inform them of options that the plan is willing to pay for?

Other plans achieve the same result more subtly. Some place a general disparagement clause in their contracts, forbidding providers from saying anything that might undermine patient confidence in the plan. The danger of this clause is very real. Patients rely on their physician to tell them which doctors or hospitals are better than others. But in plans with general disparagement clauses, a doctor could not tell a patient that 7 of the last 11 patients he referred to the plan's heart surgeon have died. That is precisely the sort of information doctors should give to patients and is precisely the kind of communication that general disparagement clauses prevent.

Sometimes, contracts contain no explicit restrictions on communications between doctors and patients, but physicians can still find the content of their medical advice restricted. A former neurologist from a large HMO indicated that ''I was told it was a mistake to tell the patient about a procedure before checking to see whether it was covered.'' Whether explicit in a contract or communicated to doctors orally, such restrictions on communication deny patients access to critical information and make a farce out of the notion of informed consent.

Today, because of market concentration, for a physician to buck a ''gag clause'' and be terminated from one of two dominant HMO's in a community, may mean whether that physician stays in practice. There is genuine fear among providers that if they act too often or too vigorously as a patient advocate, their contract won't be renewed. Under these circumstances, it takes a hero to be a patient advocate. And as we know far too well, heroes are rare.

This legislation is a balanced approach to a growing problem. While I understand the importance of the free market, Congress must protect patients who are unaware that some doctors are no longer able to communicate their best judgment. These restrictions are unethical. They violate the Hippocratic Oath. They undermine the quality of care. And, as far as I'm concerned, they have no place in the health care market.

I hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will see the importance of this issue